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ART. I.—*Note on the Mechis, together with a small Vocabulary of the Language.* By A. CAMPBELL, Esq. *Assistant to the Resident Nipal, in charge of Darjeeling.*

To H. T. PRINSEP, Esq.

*Secretary to Government of India.*

*Fort William.*

SIR,—With reference to my letters of the 13th and 20th ultimo, I have the honor to forward a few Notes on the Mechis, with a small vocabulary of their language, for the information of his Honor in Council.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. CAMPBELL.

*Darjeeling, September 5th, 1839.*

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The Mech people inhabit the forest portion of the Turai stretching along the base of the mountains from the Burrumpootur to the Konki river, which leaves the Nipal mountains about 20 miles to the west of the Mechi River. In this tract they are respectively the subjects of the Nipalese, Sikim, and Bootan governments, occupying along with the Dimals—an allied tribe—and a few Garrows, a country of about 250 miles in length, having an average breadth of from 12 to 15 miles. In the eastern portion of the Nipal Turai they are but recent settlers ;

at Nagol Bundi, on the right bank of the Mechi river, there are about 20 families; at Kalikajhar about the same number; and, west from these places, in the thickest parts of the forest, there are several small colonies, amounting in all to about 150 or 200 families. In the Sikim Turai, between the Mechi river and the Mahanuddi, there are about 400 families; to the east of the Teestah river, and in the Dooars of Bootan they are still more numerous, and to this latter portion of their *habitat* they point as the original seat of the tribe, although its name would indicate its derivation from the Mechi river. I believe that Mechis are also to be found on the northern confines of Lower Assam.

The tribes immediately in contact and mixed with the Mechis, are the Koochias or Rajbungsi Bengalese, (whose original country is Kooch Behar,) the Dimals, Thawas, and Garrows. These neighbours of the hills are the Limboos, Kerantis, Lepchas, Murmis, and Bhotias; of these several tribes, I hope to furnish some particulars anon. As they associate much with the former, and frequently meet the latter at the frontier marts, their habits and manners are naturally a good deal modified by the contact; still their peculiar usages, form of religion, language, and appearance, entitle them to the acknowledgment of their claim as a distinct people. They are fairer than the Koochias, and have little of the regular features of the Hindoo, which characterize that tribe. The cast of the Mech countenance is strongly Mongolian, but accompanied by a softness of outline which distinguishes them readily from the more marked features of the same order—of the Lepchas, Limboos, and Bhotias. They resemble the Newars of the valley of Nipal, in complexion and feature, more than any other people I have seen in or near these mountains; they are taller, however, and the fairness of complexion is entirely of a yellow tinge, whereas the Newars are frequently almost ruddy. Many of the Mechis strongly resemble the Mugs and Burmese in face and figure, and like them are much addicted to drinking spirits, smoking, and eating pawn. In common with the Assamese, they are fond of opium eating.

They never live on the hills at a higher elevation than 800 or 1,000 feet, and scarcely ever settle in the cleared and inhabited parts of the Turai, but, keep entirely to the forest in which they make clearances, cultivating crops of rice and cotton with the hoe, and grazing buffaloes. The malaria of the forest so deadly to strangers, does not at all affect them; on the contrary, they are a remarkably healthy race, and dread visiting the plains, where they are subject to severe fevers. They have no towns, and rarely even live in permanent villages, generally quitting a clearance after having had two or three successive crops from the land, to take up their abodes in a fresh portion of the forest. In the

above respects the erratic habits of the Mechis resemble those of the Thawas especially ere that race commenced, as lately, to form permanent villages in the open Turai; and are identical with those of the Dimals.

The religion of the Mechis, in so far as they have any, is the Shivaite form of Hindooism, but it goes no further than to the occasional sacrifice—when they can afford a merry-making—of goats, buffaloes, pigs, and fowls at a clay image of Kali, when they drink spirits and a fermented liquor made from Murwa to excess, and indulge in much licentiousness. The influence of the Brahmins is not recognised; they have no guroos, nor priests, nor temples; do not perform the shrādh; and bury the dead in any convenient part of the jungle, confining the obsequies to a feast among the relations of the deceased, and placing spirits and prepared food over the grave; tombs are never raised over the graves, nor have the small communities any common burying ground.

There is no distinction of castes among them. In the Nipal Turai the population of which is composed of the most varied assemblage of would-be Hindoos, and almost destitute of real ones, the Mechis are admitted within the pale, and water is taken from their hands by persons of caste, although they eat fowls, buffaloes, the cow—when beyond the Nipalese limits—and the carrion of all animals except that of the elephant, which animal is held in high respect by them, although not venerated, so far as I can learn. The carrion eating and other impure but cherished practises of the Mechis are not followed to the fullest extent in Nipal, where Hindooism is at a high premium, and breaches of the Hindoo law by all pretenders to that faith are punished with much severity. In Sikim and Bootan, however, the Mechis indulge their natural habits, and are as omnivorous a race of human beings as any in the world.

Marriages are contracted in youth or adolescence at convenience, the men purchasing their wives at prices varying from 10 to 60 Rupees, according to the beauty of the female and the means of the male. When an accepted husband has not the means of paying for his wife in money he joins her family party, working for the parents until he has fairly earned his bride according to previous contract; like the poorer classes elsewhere in India, a man can seldom afford to have more than one wife at a time, there is no restriction however on this head.

The women share equally with the men in all the labors of the field, and manage household affairs exclusively; they likewise attend at the periodical fairs (Hauths) selling, buying, and bartering the various

articles of home and imported produce. They are generally comely and disposed to fleshiness ; the usual dress is a sari (robe) of red silk made of the "Indi" or thread of the silk worm which feeds on the castor-oil plants, and their ornaments are confined to bangles and necklaces of white shell. The Indi silk is entirely a domestic manufacture, and wove by the women, who also color it with the lac dye. The Mech language has no written character, nor is it, I believe, allied to the Sanscrit ; whether it is of Tibetan or Burmese extraction, or akin to the aboriginal Indian dialects known among the Coles, Goonds, Beels, and other wild tribes, I am unable to say ; but perhaps, the accompanying small vocabulary may enable competent persons to decide its root and original country. The Mechis are necessarily uneducated, except with a very few exceptions, in the Bengali language, from which they have derived all the terms in use for articles common to a state of life removed from the savage. I regret, that I have not as yet had an opportunity of meeting a person intelligent enough to give me some idea of the construction of the language ; this must remain for further inquiry. In the vocabulary I have omitted entering words for which the language has no equivalents of its own, except in a few instances, to prove the rule above noticed. All the words with B affixed are evidently corruptions of Bengali or Hindi ; none of the metals except "silver" and "iron" have names. There is no word for "money." Gender is designated by the affix of "Jilla" or male, and "Jeu" or female, for all animals but man.\*

In the arts the Mechis have made but small progress, they excel in the care of their cotton agriculture, but as they grow only the common annual plant, the produce is not of a superior kind. Weaving is confined to the women as a domestic art. They are not addicted to trade, are averse to military service, have no artizans among them, are truly in a very primitive state of society. They are however very cheerful, have no jealousy or prejudice towards strangers, are industrious, and honest, and crimes of violence, so far as I can learn, are of rare occurrence among them.

A. CAMPBELL.

\* The names of the months and days of the week are Bengali, and the Mechis who furnished me with the vocabulary are unable to give more than nine of the cardinal numbers in their own language.

## VOCABULARY OF THE MECH LANGUAGE.

fire, wad	tigér, meesāh
water, díee	bird, tausen
air, bar	the sun, kranondoong
the earth, ha	the moon, nokabur
stone, yoontie	guroo, mōōsho
God, modiè	hog, yoma
father, appa	rice, myrang
mother, aiè	paddy, mye
brother, koî	cotton, rōōn
elder ditto, ada koî	blood, tye
younger ditto, āki koî	flesh, mōōdun
son, bēēsha	hair, kumun
daughter, bēēsha hindon	teeth, hattye
uncle (paternal), adhii	eye, mōōkun
ditto (maternal), amaî	nose, kōōntōōng
cousin (paternal	ear, kumma
uncle's son), phōōmbôî	head, koroh
wife, bihi	neck, kortunna
house, nau	mouth, koogha
raining, noka haioo	tongue, chulai
tree, bun phang	thorax, cherupa
bamboo, wah	belly, udihi
rattan, rydung	thigh, phenda
iron, shor	leg, yadii
wood, bon	foot, yappa
sword, choongri	stars, hatoorki
knife, dhaba	clouds, jumai
bed, kutt	knee, hantoo
dog, chēēma	finger, nāshima
elephant, megadett	nail of ditto, nashi kōr
rhinoceros, gandha	palm of hand, nakatulka
goat, borma	loins, janji
road, lama	child, kataû
mountain, hajoo	old man, briebà
jungle, hakea	young ditto, kōōkringindong
river, dihi	ditto female, shikala
pool, bīlōō	handsome, mōōjang
fish, nah	oil, taû
snake, jeebo	salt, shōónkri

pepper, banjóólóó	a man, manchi
maize, toomba	a woman, hinjan
to die, thibaî	plough, wayo
to sleep, móóóóbaî	cart, hoo
sit down, jhopiî	a bow, jeeleet
stand up, jhickat do	an arrow, bulla
go thither, oojhung tang	language, bhagia
come here, puki	a gun, shelaî
go quickly, kōōkri tang	table, phalla
lie down, moodoo no.	chair, kumpulai
shut the door, doowar phang	paper, lēka
go to the field, hooa tung	pen, kullum (H)
build a house, no lao	lock, [no word]
cut some wood, bon san	key, [ditto]
fetch some water, dêe labo	taut (coarse hempen cloth), phasala
feed the child, koto jani ho	hemp, phāto
kill a fowl, tâoo shītuk	til (sesamum orientale), shibeem
boil some rice, meekum chong	mustard, bishwar
light a fire, wad chāō	dal (pease), shobai
milk the cow, doodoo laboo	pawn, phātye
go to market, hattia tung	betel-nut, gwÿe
shoe, jotah (B)	lime, chūnye (H)
horse, ghorye (B)	brass, peetulye (H)
cow, mashujuh	silver, tais
buffalo, maishuo	a temple, modīe ne no (literally
door, doowar (B)	house of God)
ghee, ghu (B)	a flower, booiбар
milk, doodu (B)	mangoe, tiekjo
sugar, chinee (B)	plantain, tali
turmerick, huldi (B)	ditto tree, lie phang
thunder, jumai homdung	lime tree, narengi phang
lightning, nophlambo	fruit, betū
cloth, (cotton) he	root of tree, rudda be phang
ditto of castor-oil insect, indi	branch of ditto, dalye
ivory, megadet hatye	leaf of tree, belye
horn, kong	a bridge, chye kong
hide, āboo	build a bridge, chye kong ka
hoof, yakong	make a road, lama yāw
tail, lanjye	a plain country, ha gēbang
wool, komun	the plains of Bengal, haien
a young elephant, megadet oodai	Bootan, aga phar
a grave, phokma	snow, hem

snow falls, hem gooklindung	blue, goochum
it rains, noka hidung	white, goophoot
warm water, goodung dÿe	red, gujja
cold ditto, gooshu dÿe	yellow, koomoo
drink water, dye ling ni	green, gangohu
good, gahum	black, koomun
bad, húmma	

[No other Colors distinguished by names.]

leather, bigoor	to swim, chanturri
mattress, gondoo	cotton seed, koon tye
a Bootanee, kongar	ditto plant, koon phang
a Bengalli, hāshá	sugar-cane, kooshiar (B)
a Mahomedan, tōōrōōp	a bear, moofur
a Priest or pujari, modie hōōis	wild dog, sheekoo
a Nipalese, muggur	vulture, sheegoon
a boat, nan	crow, taúka
a jungle fowl, hangrūni dāusru	a well, dīre kor
a male, jilla	blacksmith, kamar
a female, jeu	weaver, he daio
spirits, chao	hunter, mye kankea
large, ghidett	a spotted deer, kotia menbeang
small, udye	distiller, shoondi
tall, gujau	fine cloth, he goba
short, gahye	coarse ditto, he rujja
broad, goo-ar	new ditto, he guddan
a great man, grah manichi	the sky, no krang
to laugh, meniyao	above, chá
to cry, dagup	below, ching
to beat, shītuknuh	to one side, chapin
to be angry, brapmo	

*Cardinal Numbers.*

one, munche	five, munbha
two, munye	six, mundho
three, muntum	seven, munchini
four, munbre	eight, munjo kunnü

[No numeral beyond this]

night, hor	hard, guzia
day, chán	cheap, gair
month, más (B)	dear, kom
year, buruk (B)	heavy, eeliching
soft, oofra	light, rujenchung

wet, ghichi  
 dry, kran,  
 beard, konkup  
 moustaches, [no word]  
 lip, kooshuti  
 eyebrow, mooshu kor  
 eyelash, moosheam  
 good rice, mujang myrong  
 sweet, kolan  
 sour, kokye  
 bitter, goká  
 light, monabai  
 darkness, komshibai  
 raw, kotung  
 boiled, komun,  
 hunger, meenka honkia  
 grass, jheekáb  
 lame, nating kora  
 deaf, kumma kanai  
 dumb, ryeinga  
 pain, sadung  
 pleasure, moongu sagyi  
 sickness, chobea jodung  
 small pox, bontijaia

fever and ague, loomgaia  
 rheumatism, beeshtong  
 belly ache, yudichaia  
 head ache, koro chaio  
 purging, kābai  
 to-day, dinisanchi  
 yesterday, kapunsanche  
 day before ditto, sombursanche  
 the day before that, tamnepursanche  
 to-morrow, miasanchi  
 outside, shetula  
 inside, noh  
 before, shekang  
 behind, yeun  
 quickly, kookei  
 slowly, larhay  
 a wall, jujoor  
 a post, tongphang  
 a beam, mandali  
 a roof, mookoom  
 a cooking pot, kanta  
 a large ditto, mikamduh  
 a water ewer, di heu  
 a plate, toorsi

*Example of forming feminine and masculine.*

bull, moshu jilla,  
 dog, cheema jilla,  
 buck, borma jilla,  
 tiger, meeshāh jilla,  
 nephew, adye,

cow, mashu jeu  
 bitch, chema jeu  
 she-goat, borma jeu  
 tigress, meesah jeu  
 niece, anai

*Sentences.*

What is your name?	nunni mooa mamoo
Where are you going?	noo bujuntanguh
Whence come you?	noo bujung prapaio
Where do you live?	noo nūa mongwhye
What is your father's name?	noong noorkpa mammo
Shew me the road to Pankabari?	Pankabari lama buriye
What is the name of that hill?	be hajoo māmoo
What is the price of rice at Dorjeling?	myrong sirifehe Dorgeling maelai

## Names of Men.

Chakla,  
Sunka,  
Balasache,  
Deringa sache,  
Poojoon,  
Esula,  
Puharoo,  
Oonti,  
Jenti tokla,  
Mhedla,  
Secuta.

## Names of Women.

Phagooni,  
Bisaje,  
Bisahawa,  
Furgunnic.

A. CAMPBELL.

ART. II.—*Researches on the Gale and Hurricane in the Bay of Bengal on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of June, 1839; with reference to the Theory of the Law of Storms in India.* By HENRY PIDDINGTON.

## PART II.

That the hurricane part of the tempest which we are considering was blowing in tolerably well defined circles, has been, I think, clearly shewn in the foregoing part of this memoir. The object of this second part, is to adduce evidence, which shews that it was at the same time both a *gale*, i. e. a strong wind blowing in with tolerable steadiness from one quarter of the compass; and a *hurricane*, namely, a violent wind blowing in a circle or vortex of greater or less diameter. At present too it seems probable, from the dates, that the gale produced the hurricane. We may consider that this storm was one of those which usually occur at the change of the moonsoon from NE. to SW., which in various parts of the Bay may be said to take place between the 15th May and 15th June. It is from the 1st to the 15th June that we look for the rains in Calcutta, though sometimes, as in this year, they may be said to have begun in April. It will be borne in mind then, that whatever follows, whether facts or hypotheses, relates only to the beginning of the SW. monsoon. Future observations will inform us, whether the October Gales as they are called,—though they sometimes occur in November,—are subject to the same or different laws. (The European reader will recollect, that October is the epoch at which the NE. monsoon takes the place of the SW. one.)